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## An Account of BOOKS.

- I. Osservationi Naturali, ove si contengono materie Medico-Fisiche, &c. *Natural Observations, containing several Medico-Physical and Botanical Matters, with divers Natural Productions, several sorts of Phosphori, Subterraneous Fires in Italy, and other Curious Subjects, in Familiar Letters, by Signior Paul Boccone, M. D. Printed at Bononia in 12<sup>o</sup>. 1684.*

OUR Commerce with the *Italian* Booksellers having been for several Years less constant, it may not be amiss to present the Reader with an Account of some of the most Curious relating chiefly to Natural History or Philosophy.

I shall begin with an Abstract of this Miscellaneous Treatise of the Ingenious *Boccone*, written in *Italian*, and containing Twenty Six several Observations. The Author had formerly published in *French* Natural Enquiries and Observations on *Corall Asteroites*, &c. at *Paris*, Anno 1671. reprinted afterwards at *Amsterdam* in 1674. and at *Oxford* his Icons and Descriptions of the rare Plants of *Sicilia*, &c. were Printed Anno 1674.

In the First of the Observations contained in this Tract the Author treats of the Effects, Causes, and Preparation of the *Noctiluca* or *Phosphorus Aëreus*, as it was made by the Honourable *Boyle*. The 2<sup>d</sup>. *Obs.* is of Subterraneous Fires and their *Phænomena* and Cause from the Effervescence of an Acid and Alkali, with an *Ethereal* or Subtile Matter interposed. The 3<sup>d</sup>. *Obs.* is of  
Cures

Cures and Preservatives from the Plague, where he so much extols Veficatories, which in the Year 1656 preserved as many as made use of them, when the Plague was very hot at *Genoa*. And here he Observes by the way, that the Root of *Colchicum* is no other ways a good Remedy in this case, than as being a sort of gentle Veficatory, from the Acrisous Particles of which it consists, and not as an Amulet, as some have supposed. In the 4th. *Obs.* He Discourses of the Iron Rings made of the Nail (taken out of a Stone-Horse's near Foot before) by hammering only without Fire, as good for the Cramp and Giddiness, worn on the Ring-Finger, which if of any prevalency, he says it is from the Volatile Particles it received from the Horse's Hoof, and not as any Charm. The 5th. *Obs.* Contains a Catalogue of Natural Effects usually attributed to Sympathy. The 6th. *Obs.* Treats of a *Succedaneum* to Crabs-Eyes, of the little Chalky Stones found on the outsides of the *Scait* Fish on the *Pastinaca Marina*, &c. The 7th. *Obs.* Is of several rare Plants, and some Empirick Remedies chiefly against Witchcraft. The 8th. *Obs.* Describes a certain Smoaking Liquor made of *Mercury* and *Tin*. The 9th. Discourses of yellow and black Amber found in divers Places of *Italy*, a new Discovery to most. The 10th. *Obs.* Is of the Bed of a certain Insect (not unlike those with several little Cellules made by Bees or Flies in hollow Trees, or on the Leaves of Plants) found in the midst of an Oyster-shell in Mount *Marius*. The 11th. *Obs.* Is of several Animalcules found in little shelly Tubes. The 12th. Treats of the Vertues of several Plants for divers Diseases of Beasts. The 13th. is of a certain Man that after his Wifes Death suckled his Child at his own Breasts, Anno 1633. which he confirms by a Credible Testimony. The 14th. *Obs.* Gives us an Account of the several *Museums* or Repositories of Curiosities to be seen in *Italy*. The 15th. *Obs.* Discovers the Author's Method

thod of Preparing the *Bononian Stone* or *Phosphorus*: to which is subjoyned a Curious Observation communicated to him by *Joh. Baptista Martelli*, concerning Humane Urine. The 16th. *Obs.* Enumerates several Earthy Concrets, good for absorbing and correcting Acids. The 17th. *Obs.* Defends the harmless use of *Antimony*, much esteeming the *Panacæa* made of crude *Antimony* with fixt Nitre, described by *Fr. Lana*, in his *Prodromus*, p. 126. The 18th. *Obs.* Discovers the wonderful Texture of the Root of the *Perfoliata Alpina latif. min. Baubini*, made up of many Membranes curiously complicated together; by which Signature he supposes it good for Ruptures, and the rather because another *Species* of *Perfoliata*, by *Chabreus* called *Auricula Leporis*, has been used with Success in that case. The 19th. *Obs.* is concerning a Spring, called *Pliny's*, and the River by the Inhabitants now named *Torbidone*; which Fountain in *April*, *Anno* 1680. in a quarter of an hour rise three Inches perpendicular, and sunk down again in half an hour's time, repeating this Flood and Ebb alternately every two hours; which Phænomenon was observed not two days, as is usually there thought, but only a few hours before a shower of Rain. In the 20th. *Obs.* He shews that the Musky smell coming from some Pismires and Flies of *Pisa*, proceeds only from Sulphureous Particles mixt with a Volatile Salt in the Dung of those little Animals. In the 21st. He gives four Reasons why some Plants are green all the Year. 1. From the abundance of Oily Particles, as in *Tansy*, &c. 2. A more Crass and Viscous Substance, as in the *Semper-vivum maj.* &c. 3. A very much interwoven texture of the Fibres of the Leaves, as in *Opuntia*, *Aloe Americana*, &c. 4. A more hard and close outward Skin, with which the Leaves are covered, as in the *Laurus Alexandrina*, *Box*, &c. The 22th. *Obs.* Describes a peculiar sort of Insect, which he found on the Leaves of the *Myrtus Tarentina* at *Rome*,  
*Anno*

Anno 1678; they were of a grey colour, and a convex figure, like the half of an Hempseed, and by the Microscope shewed scaley or plated like the *Millipedes*; being rub'd and bruised on a Paper, they gave it a curious Purple colour, whence he conjectures they are a-kin to the *Cochinille* Insect, which *Paulus Ammannus in Manuduct ad Materiam Med.* likens to the *Cimices*, and says, that they are found on the *Ficus Indica*. In the 23<sup>d</sup>. *Obs.* He adds some other Reasons of the continual greenness of some Plants, which, though defended with but a thin Skin, yet resist the cold of the Winter, by reason of its being of a like texture with that of a Man's, which the Microscope discovers, and so is capable of affording the same defence; such are *Arum*, *vulg.* *Brasica*, &c. But some Plants, though of a solid texture, cannot endure the alterations of the Seasons, from the vehemence of the South Winds, and want of sufficient Moisture in themselves. In the 24<sup>th</sup>. *Obs.* Several Prodigious Effects of Sulphureous Exhalations in divers Parts of *Italy*, are related. In the 25<sup>th</sup>. *Obs.* He adds some more thoughts concerning the *Sal Ammoniac* he found on *Iron-Scoria* thrown up by *Ætna* in the Year 1669, to those he had formerly publish'd in *Disquisit. & Observ. Physicis circa Corallium*, &c. *Edit. Amst. p. 47.* Answering a Question proposed by *Menzelius* about the *Bononian Stone*. Lastly, In the 26<sup>th</sup>. *Obs.* He asserts the great Vertue of a Mineral *Bezoar* found in *Sicily*, confirming it with the Cure of an *Epidemick Fever* in a Virgin of Nineteen Years old, when all other *Alexipharmicks* had proved unsuccessful, provoking a considerable Sweat, and throwing off the whole *Cuticula*; and shews the reason of this Cure.

This Ingenious Searcher into Nature, not satisfied with what he has already presented the Curious, in a Letter dated at *Palermo*, *Decemb. 4<sup>th</sup>.* 1693. directed to the Secretary of the *Royal Society*, promises in a short  
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time to Publish another Book of 250 new Plants lately gathered by himself in *Sicily*, graved on 120 Copper Plates; of which the Title will be, *Museo di Fisica e di Esperienze, arricchito di Figure di Piante nove, Osservazione, Note Medicinali, e Ragionamenti, secondo i Principii di Neoterici, disposto in Decade VIII.*

In the same Letter he tells us, that the *Lychnis Pseudomelanthio similis Affricanus glaber angustifolius, Pauli Hermans*, is the same with the *Lychnis Calyce duriori Bocconi* *lc. & descr. Rar. Plant.* The *Stachis Betonica folio subincano P. Herman.* is the *Horminum Spicatum Lavendulae odore Bocconi*: And that these with several other rare Plants described by late Authors, are found frequently in *Sicily*.

He likewise Proposes a new Scorbutic Plant, which from the Analogy of several external Notes and Characters he thinks may prove a very good *Succedaneum*, where the *Cochlearia folio subrotundo Casp. Baubini* is less plentiful, *viz. Thlaspi Leucoii folio latifolium platycarpus Siculum, semper virens & semper florens.* This Plant having a very biting taste, a thick leaf, and smell like the *Cochlearia*, confirms his Conjecture, besides the Generical Note of the Seed, the most certain Indication, and sure Guide to discover the Qualities of unknown Plants, according to *Fabius Columna*, and *Andreas Cæsalpinus*. This he submits to the Tryal of Physicians; observing that they choose out amongst the several *Species* of the *Anagallis aquatica* that called *Anag. aqu. maj. folio subrotundo*, C. B. Pin. possibly because of the Saline, Nitrous, and Acid Volatile Particles found in its Leaves, which abound also in Scurvy-grass, and this *Sicilian Thlaspi*.

## II. Lezioni intorno alla Natura delle Mofette, &c.

*Discourses concerning the Nature of Damps,*  
by Leonardus Capuanus, a Member of the  
*Academy of the Investigantes.* Naples, in 4<sup>to</sup>.  
1683.

IN the Preface to this Treatise, the Son, who is the Publisher thereof, gives us the History of the Beginning and Fate of the Academy of the *Investigantes*, whereof his Father, the Author of this Book, was one, in short, thus: Marquess *Andreas Concubletti*, after the Example of the *Royal* and *Florentine* Societies, invited the Learned Men of *Naples* to meet on certain days at his House to Discourse of and to Cultivate Learning and Knowledge; these assumed the Name of *Investigantes*, with an Hound for their Impress, and *Lucretius's* word, *Vestigia lustrat*, for their Motto. Scarce had this Society met four or five times, from which some promised themselves great Matters, but it was again broken in pieces, by the removal of the chief Person under whose Protection they met. It was more than Twenty Years before this Piece, containing some of the Lectures made in that Assembly, were publish'd in Memory of the being of such a Society, and Dedicated to the Queen of *Sweden*. In the first of these the Author enumerates the chief Places that formerly, or at this day exhale a noxious Vapour, treating largely of the Caves and Lakes near *Naples*, *Puzzuoli*, *Baiæ*, and *Cumæ*, making the Lake *Avernus* differ from these Damps, in that it is mischievous only to Birds, whereas the other are so to all Creatures. Next, he gives the Opinions of the Old and New Philosophers concerning the causes of these Damps. In the *Second Lecture*, supposing Life to consist  
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in the due Fermentation of the Blood, and other Juices of the Body, he shews how necessary the Air is for the continuing of Life, both in Plants and Animals, which the former that want Lungs, do yet receive in Vessels Analogous thereto; having shewn that a Vivifick *Spirit* or *Aura*, generated out of the Blood by the Brain, is the Principle of Motion in Animals; and that the dilating of the *Thorax* in breathing depends on this *Aura* only, which by the direction of the Soul is sent into the Nerves of all the Members, so causing Respiration (which he makes a voluntary Action) and accompanies the Air, received by the Vessels, to the Blood. In the *Third Lecture* he Examines the several Effects of the Caves exhaling these Damps, attempting to explain their causes, viz. Lighted Torches are extinguisht by the thick and compact Mineral Exhalations which oppose the Particles giving or composing Fire, and compress them so, that they are forced to give way, and are dissipated. That in Animals these Vapours rising by little and little out of the Veins of the Earth, and united together in these Subterraneous Caverns, forcibly enter the Organs of Respiration, and either wholly conquer or drive out the Vivifick *Aura*, or at least so contract it, and lessen its Power, as to stop the Motion of the Blood, and indeed all other Motions, and Life it self. That deadly Lakes kill only the Birds that fly over them, by reason of the Mineral steams that from the bottom penetrating the Water, arise in a thin weakned Exhalation, and Birds requiring a more refined and purer Air than other Animals, are soonest affected by it. Then he Queries upon what Account *Avernus*, formerly from its deadly Quality dedicated to *Pluto*, is now so altered, as to have been hurtless both to Fish and Birds for a long time, and subscribes to their Opinion who refer the cause to the burning of the adjacent *Gaurus*, now called *Barbarus*, and suppose that the Mortal Vapours formerly penetrating



netrating these Waters, are now burnt out. There are several Curious and Learned Particulars interspersed in this Treatise relating to Natural History, concerning several Bodies hidden in the Bowels of the Earth, nearly agreeing with those daily in our view.

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# L O N D O N :

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